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Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/880,424

Applicant(s)

MORROW ET AL.

Examiner

Marc R. Filipczyk

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to RCE of 6/13/05 and interview on 8/29/05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,3-7 and 9-12.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date 8/29/05.
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Action is responsive to Applicant's RCE request and amendment filed on June 13, 2005.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 13, 2005 has been entered.

Amended claims 1-12 are pending.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jodi Hartman on August 29, 2005.

A short summary of the telephone interview is included.

AMENDMENT TO CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing computer software help utility, comprising the steps of:

providing a text entry area on a tool bar of a software application data entry and editing window;

receiving a search string at the text entry area;

searching a database for answers responsive to the search string;

displaying a list of potential answers responsive to the search string;

selecting, in response to a user input, one of the potential answers responsive to the search string;

displaying a help text responsive to selecting one of the potential answers;

after receiving the search string at the text entry area, storing the search string in a list of most recently used search strings;

determining if the received search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings; and

if the received search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings, then:

retrieving the list of most recently used search strings; and

displaying the list of most recently used search strings.

2. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) A method for providing computer software help utility, comprising the steps of:

- providing a text entry area on the a tool bar of a software application data entry and editing window;

- receiving a search string at the text entry area;

- searching a database for answers responsive to the search string;

- displaying a list of potential answers responsive to the search string;

- allowing a user to determine whether an acceptable answer is provided in the list of potential answers;

- if an acceptable answer is not provided in the list of potential answers, receiving a refined search string at the text entry area, and searching the database for more answers responsive to the refined search string;

- displaying a second list of potential answers responsive to the refined search string;

- selecting, in response to user input, one of the potential answers from the second list of potential answers;

- displaying a help text responsive to selecting one of the potential answers;

- after receiving the search string and the refined search string at the text entry area, storing the search string and the refined search string in a list of most recently used search strings;

determining if the received search string or the refined search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings; and

if the received search string or the refined search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings, then:

retrieving the list of most recently used search strings; and

displaying the list of most recently used search strings.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer, perform the steps of:

providing a text entry area on a tool bar of a software application data entry and editing window;

receiving a search string at the text entry area;

searching a database for answers responsive to the search string;

displaying a list of potential answers responsive to the search string;

selecting, in response to user input, one of the potential answers responsive to the search string;

displaying a help text responsive to selecting one of the potential answers;

after receiving the search string at the text entry area, storing the search string in a list of most recently used search strings;

determining if the received search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings; and

if the received search string is related to a search string stored in the list of

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most recently used search strings, then:

- retrieving the list of most recently used search strings; and
- displaying the list of most recently used search strings.

8. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A system for providing computer software help utility, comprising:

a software module operative

to provide a text entry area on the a tool bar of a software application

data entry and editing window;

to receive a search string at the text entry area;

to search a database for answers responsive to the search string;

to display a list of potential answers responsive to the search

string;

to allow a user to determine whether an acceptable answer is

provided in the list of potential answers;

if an acceptable answer is not provided in the list of potential

answers, to receive a refined search string at the text entry area, and to search the database for more answers responsive to the refined search string;

to display a second list of potential answers responsive to the

refined search string;

to allow a user to select one of the potential answers from the

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second list of potential answers;

to display a help text responsive to selecting one of the potential answers;

to store the search string and the refined search string in a list of most recently used search strings after receiving the search string and the refined search string at the text entry area;

to determine if the search string or the refined search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings; and

if the search string or the refined search string is related to a search string stored in the list of most recently used search strings, then:

to retrieve the list of most recently used search strings; and

to display the list of most recently used search strings.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-12 are allowable over the prior art of record, renumbered as claims 1-10, respectively.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims 1, 5, 7 and 11 are allowable because the prior art of record or that encountered in searching for the invention, fails to disclose or suggest a computer software help utility wherein on a tool bar of a software application data entry and editing window is provided for searching, storing the search string in a list of most recently used search strings, determining if the stored string is related to the list of most recently used search strings, and if it is, displaying a list of

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potential answers and a help text responsive to the search and the list of most recently used search strings, as claimed in addition to the other claim provisions.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 9, 10 and 12 depend from claims 1, 5, 7 and 11 respectively, and are therefore allowable for the same reasons.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The following prior art shows the state of art with respect to searching and software help systems:

U.S. Patent No. 6,144,958 of Ortega et al.

U.S. Patent No. 6,618,722 of Johnson et al.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Marc R. Filipczyk whose telephone number is (571) 272-4019. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Safet Metjahic can be reached on (571) 272-4023. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

MF
August 30, 2005


FRANTZ COBY
PRIMARY EXAMINER